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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.

MARINE CORPS RESERVES: AN OPERATIONAL OPTION  
FOR A SHRINKING ARMED FORCE

by

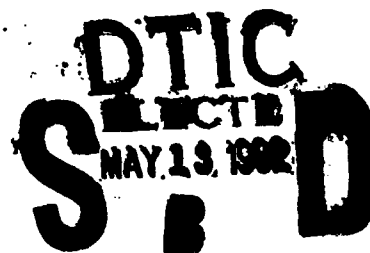
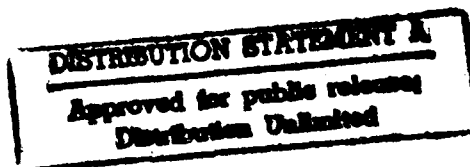
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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Operations Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: *D.M. Winn*

19 June 1992



92-12594



92 5 11 066

## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for Public Release; distribution is unlimited.		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) C	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) NAVAL WAR COLLEGE NEWPORT, R.I. 02841			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.		PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.	
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) Marine Corps Reserves: An Operational Option for a Shrinking Armed Force (U)					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) David M. Winn, Major, USMC					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT FINAL		13b. TIME COVERED FROM TO		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 920213	15. PAGE COUNT 35
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	Reserve Mobilization, Initial Volunteers, Augmentation		
			Reconstitution, Employment, FTS, EAD, IMA		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) The Marine Corps Reserve can support active duty units, and will become increasingly critical to sustainability as the force structure declines. Reserve support is not currently a first choice for augmentation by operational commanders. However, as less active units are available, commanders will be forced to tap reserve personnel, especially in the service support communities. The Marine Corps Reserve possesses dynamic capability that should not be overlooked as a last resort measure. The strengths of the reserve include: trained, functional, combat power or sustainment support. Their acquired training, funding, planning and augmentation assets will become crucial for the operational tempo, as active forces shrink. The key limitation to the reserve is the legislated periods they can serve on active duty. This is a serious weakness, which must be neutralized by effective planning or coordination. Reserve units can be used as a base force for theater training operations, annual training augmentation, or mustered as initial volunteers to support the commander. Reserves can assist in bridging the gaps created by downsizing the active force. Planning for this support must be integrated now.					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL CHAIRMAN, OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 841-3414		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL C



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## ABSTRACT

The Marine Corps Reserve can support active duty units, and will become increasingly critical to sustainability as the force structure declines. Reserve support is not currently a first choice for augmentation by operational commanders. However, as less active units are available, commanders will be forced to tap reserve personnel, especially in the service support communities. The Marine Corps Reserve possesses dynamic capability that should not be overlooked as a last resort measure. The strengths of the reserve include trained, functional, combat power or sustainment support. Their acquired training, funding, planning and augmentation assets will become crucial for the operational tempo, as active forces shrink. The key limitation to the reserve is the legislated periods they can serve on active duty. This is a serious limitation, which must be neutralized by effective planning or coordination. Reserve units can be used as a base force for theater training operations, annual training augmentation or mustered as initial volunteers to support the commander. Reserves can assist in bridging the gaps created by downsizing the active force. Planning for this support must be integrated now.



## I. INTRODUCTION

The next decade will witness a transition for the Armed Forces of the United States, as active duty personnel strengths decline. Where will the operational commander gain the increases in manpower needed to accomplish his missions? The United States has placed an increased reliance on its reserve forces, to provide a personnel surge if needed. Reserve forces will gain more responsibility as active duty forces diminish. The decision to use reserve forces will soon be a factor in the operational decision making process. A structure must be in place for reserve consideration during this decision cycle. The Marine Corps Reserve has such a structure and could be used as a model for all services to gauge the effectiveness of their reserve organization. Operational commanders can rely on Marine Corps reserve personnel to enhance the capabilities of limited active duty resources. This concept is consistent with our National Military Strategy and is the purpose of this paper.

As military leaders, we are tasked to secure our national security objectives of "... survival of the United States ... healthy and growing U.S. economy ... stable and secure world ..."<sup>1</sup> These strategic objectives will be achieved by "Deterrence ... Forward Presence ... Crisis Response ... Force Reconstitution..."<sup>2</sup> We have shifted from containment of communism "... to a more diverse flexible strategy which is regionally oriented ..."<sup>3</sup> In view of these over arching concepts, the first obstacle to an operational commander is his adequacy of own force estimate. The



commander must either request additional forces, or request a change to his mission. In either case, the commander's leadership will be tested and genius will be required. The commander will have to develop different approaches to the personnel shortages.

This paper will focus on one such source of trained personnel, currently available in the Marine Corps Reserve. Then, evaluate whether this source conforms to the total force policy which "... has placed a substantial portion of our military power in high quality, well trained ... reserve units."<sup>4</sup> There are many strengths and weaknesses to this type of military structure. When viewed from the three star, Fleet Marine Force Commanding General level, these capabilities or limitations provide a guide for reserve uses. Many critics argue that the reserve cannot mobilize in time to meet a crisis. Others believe reserves simply do not have the required training to respond quickly. Congress believes limited active duty numbers, backed by reservists, is the way we will posture through the nineties. All positions have merit, but Congress makes the law. This leaves our current active duty force carrying an enormous burden for national security.

As the Fleet Marine Force Commanding General plans the execution cycle of the deployment plan, he follows the "... overwhelming force to terminate conflicts quickly ..." <sup>5</sup> doctrine of our national defense strategy. This strategy also relies heavily on reserve participation to "... assist and augment responding active units."<sup>6</sup> This reserve asset has the capability of integration into the daily routine of over burdened active units. As the



## II. OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Fleet Marine Force Commanding General and his staff, will consider adequacy of own force levels with diligence as the services get smaller. Contingencies will not take care of themselves, therefore, operational planning will be driven by the personnel estimates. There are various avenues available to gain personnel. The commander can ask for active duty increases, redistribute his forces, or request augmentation by reserve units. All of the courses will solve the personnel shortage, but timing with the regional situation will bear on the feasibility of each. The United States has already proven that it can mobilize the reserve forces for war. Will the same indicators produce the same presidential decisions in the future? After the requests for increases have been submitted, the commander still has limited access to the Marine Reserve system. The process begins with the personnel estimate.

As the commander considers the current adequacy of his forces, he realizes that commitments have increased. The standard Marine units assigned to two Amphibious Readiness Groups (ARGs) have been increased to three.<sup>8</sup> This small addition to forward presence has already doubled the tempo of active duty Marine forces as the end strength in personnel declines. As more of these limited active duty forces are assigned to contingencies, the operational commander must consider the tasking of a reserve. These considerations must be made in advance to gain the timely response required



in our current unstable world. In any scenario, there will be more contingencies than we have forces to respond. It is doubtful that the contingencies will take care of themselves. Therefore, the operational commander needs preplanned requests for additional personnel. The other option is to request a change in mission. Since all commanders are mission oriented, the request to change a crisis mission is unlikely. Considerations for additional forces will be essential to accomplish an assigned task. This evaluation leads to options for additional forces.

The Operational Commander can first request his CINC to negotiate with the National Command Authorities (through the Joint Chiefs) for an increased force mix.<sup>9</sup> This request does not stand a good chance of approval since guidance has already been published not to expect increases. CINCs are being tasked to plan and employ their base forces for a "come as you are"<sup>10</sup> engagement or response. The second consideration would be for the operational commander to ask another theater service component commander, to make up the shortfall.<sup>11</sup> This has worked in the past by "chopping" Marine units from Pacific forces to reinforce the Atlantic forces. However, now with regional tailoring, this may only be an option once, then the commander must consider courses to cover the other contingencies. Finally, the operational commander can get his CINC or his Service Secretary to request the use of Presidential authority for involuntary call-up of reserves.<sup>12</sup>

A Presidential call-up would most likely be executed if:  
"Large numbers of reserves are required (thousands), the duration





of the crisis will be months or longer ... the crisis is severe enough to involve all services, and threatens gravely, U.S. interests, ... and international/political environment support the call-up..."<sup>13</sup> All of these factors existed in Desert Shield/Storm. If they exist again, there is a great opportunity for an involuntary recall of reserve personnel. Under these grave circumstances, operational commanders will receive the personnel augmentation needed to expand their operations. The Presidential recall will remain a critical consideration for an operational commander.

In cases short of the magnitude needed for Desert Shield/Storm, there are no established parameters for a recall. When several crisis responses are required, but not under the conditions severe enough to warrant involuntary recall, the commander has access to reserve initial volunteers.<sup>14</sup> These volunteers are augmentees, provided by reserve Commanding Generals, through the Commandant of the Marine Corps.<sup>15</sup> Reserves who volunteer for active duty have specific restrictions as to length of active service, contingent upon reserve funding available to support such a program. Eleven hundred Marine reserves volunteered before the Presidential call-up for desert operations.<sup>16</sup> More reservists could have volunteered, if the program had been coordinated. This system currently presents one of the better courses of action for increasing numbers of Marines to support operational contingencies. This concept will be examined later in the "Employment" section of this paper.



It appears that the regional response scenario is more realistic for future operations, than a full scale operation the size of Desert Storm. The U.S. must be postured to respond to both. A recall of reservists would ease the personnel situation, but may take more time for a Presidential decision. Therefore, current planning for regional conflicts will not only encompass how to employ scarce active duty resources, but must also begin to plan the sequentially phased introduction of reserve forces. An operational commander will seek active duty personnel first. As these assets are depleted, reserves will fill the void.

Reserve Marines have the training, desire, and capability to respond, but must be given lead time to mobilize. The operational commander must carefully evaluate this capability and realize the value of tapping this resource under current regulations. Reserve forces are designed to add to our base force structure. Planning, coordination, reserve training, integration and accountability, focused from the operational level downward, will prepare the reserves for their augmentation missions. If completed, and consideration to this "fourth maneuver element" is given, then the operational commander can employ his reserve Marines within the specific limitations imposed by Congress.



### III. LIMITATIONS

Reserve forces have several limitations. Most of these limitations are imposed by Congress to curtail the use of force as a political instrument. The concept of a large reserve is self limiting by itself, and places the burden of security on fewer active duty units. The reserve will acquire a more substantial support role for active units, as more support units are cadred than combat units. As these roles develop, the reserve force will develop a "reconstitution" mindset that causes inflexibility for rapid mobilization. In addition, the mobilization structure is restricted to the political leaders who determine when the reserves will be used in an emergency. These basic limitations are essentially isolating the time that reservists can serve on active duty. If this limitation is not understood, perceptions of reservists can be formed that minimize their effectiveness. These perceptions must be avoided through analysis, then aggressive planning done to offset the time constraintss that bind reserve participation.

Reserve forces have traditionally been thought of as reconstitution and augmentation forces, in the event of a major crisis or war.<sup>17</sup> The U.S. concept of use of reserve forces is following the same path as the Israeli Armed Forces, with large numbers of ready reservists to augment the active force in a National Emergency. This system requires early warning and almost caused disastrous results in the 1973 Yom Kipper War.<sup>18</sup> Israel is dependent on this



reserve system for self defense. The same reserve system, applied to the U.S., faces severe limitations. These include, the scope of our global commitments, the proximity of our reserves to their mobilization centers and, most importantly, the U.S. does not face the same threats as Israel. This distinctly contrasts the Israeli's limited geographic boundaries, the locations of reserve personnel close to their equipment, and their 72 hour mobilization time. For the Marine Corps Reserve, timeliness for mobilization is the most critical limitation to their employment. This limitation must be operationally negated by effective planning and early integration into the active duty units.<sup>19</sup>

The Marine Corps Reserve currently has an increasing responsibility of sustaining the active force, when committed. As the active duty force declines, the support structure takes the largest reduction. Truck companies, engineers, reconnaissance companies, force service support and wing units are the first to be reduced in personnel. The equipment and assets of these units are subsequently placed in the reserve structure. The reserve gets the assets, but does not increase the personnel structure. As a result, the loss of active duty assets are never totally counter-balanced by the reserve. Currently, 50% of the force reconnaissance companies, 40% of all armor, and 35% of all the sustainability assets for active duty augmentation are in the reserve inventory.<sup>20</sup> This trend appears to be expanding as the active force draws down, and limits the sustainability of the remaining, active duty MEFs. In order to employ this supporting capability, the reserves rely on early



warning for mobilization. The current plan is not to mobilize the reserve early, since the MEF has the "capability to deploy without reserve reinforcement for the first 60 days of a conflict."<sup>21</sup> This concept will rapidly become outdated as more and more of the support units are trimmed from the MEF in force reduction plans. The reserves must be an operational consideration from the beginning of a MEF sustainment plan.

The mindset of utilizing the reserve solely as a reconstitution force is a self imposed limitation. This view severely limits the options of a commander or his perceived courses of action. Without fully examining the role of reserve manpower in day to day operations, the commander may be only working with 60% of his available Marine manpower. Commanders and their staffs overlook the availability of reserve assets and do not understand the conditions under which they can gain their help. The limits of legislated reserve periods of active duty are a barrier to planning for employment. The requirements for a reserve call-up are intimidating. Reserve deadlines for active duty are perceived as cumbersome for active duty operations.

If authorized, the President can order reserves involuntarily to active duty for 90 days, with one 90 day extension for a total of six months active service.<sup>22</sup> Beyond this limited activation, Congress must be involved to legislatively keep the reservists on active duty. An operational commander must understand the recall system in order to request it early. The judgment of the commander will be increasingly important if a crisis does not follow a



standard build-up (Desert Shield). A sequential build-up may not meet the criteria for a Presidential call-up authority. Thus, the commander may be on his own to work within the legislative constraints to gain additional reserve personnel, when other force additions are not feasible. The commander has some flexibility within the restraints imposed by Congress and needs to be imaginative. He can no longer apply an outdated blueprint for reserve employment.

From a command perspective, there are idealistic limitations for reservists. They have always had a stigma of being "weekend warriors." They are viewed as "part time" Marines, not as good as the Marine who trains every day.<sup>23</sup> Reserves require time to mobilize and train at the station of initial assignment. The chain of command to reach this asset is obscure. There are no dotted lines in the wire diagram that put reserve forces near an operational commander. Finally, as Israel learned in 1973, the "hardship of activation cannot be repeated often."<sup>24</sup> At the individual unit and national levels, funding resources are limited. If reserves are used, they must make a considerable contribution to the operational scheme of maneuver and have the public support for mobilization. These are serious limitations for a commander, making reserve use a last resort measure.

Real, prevailing restrictions on the use of reserves tend to cause commanders to look elsewhere for personnel. Why would a commander bother with the turmoil of using reserve manpower? When analyzed, even with the severe limitations on reserve use, an



operational commander has a viable, capable, trained force that he can innovatively employ from the reserves. The use of this enhancement capability must match the situation, the unit's capability, and be preplanned so as to meet the strict legal boundaries of their use. Even with these restrictions, the reserve provides a potent additional resource to the commander's theater. The reserve capability outweighs its limitations.



#### IV. CAPABILITIES

Even with the limitations imposed on our reserve forces, they continue to maintain substantial capability. This capability will be increasingly difficult to ignore as fewer active duty forces, gain more contingency responsibilities. Desert Shield/Storm provided the U.S. with an opportunity to exercise the Marine Corps Reserve in combat operations. "Despite the problems, Marine Corps Reserve Forces were one of the great success stories of the war. They showed they could perform as advertised ... not as a second stringer who would suffice in an emergency, but as a highly motivated ... competent Marine (force)."<sup>25</sup> Reserves also bring leadership, experience, unity and funding to the active duty units they support. Company sized units responded under the thirty day mobilization requirement and were capable of bringing increased experience to active Marine forces.

As an example, reserve Marines in Company B, 4th Tank Battalion were just one of many units who distinguished themselves. "... this unit was activated in November (1990), ... completed a 23 day MIAI training program in 18 days. The unit arrived in Saudi Arabia on 19 February (1991) and into battle on 24 February (1991). In four engagements during the course of the war, Company B destroyed 59 enemy tanks, about half of which were T-72s, without losing one of its (own) tanks."<sup>26</sup> Most Marine reservists arrived at the war zone fully trained and capable of assuming warfighting missions.





Extensive modern combat power, fully task organized strength and the ability to integrate into modern active duty units are their main strengths. Reserve units at the platoon and company level, also develop a unity all their own. Most of the senior enlisted Marines have been with the same unit for over eight years. Couple this with a standard enlistment of six years for a new Marine joining the unit, and continuity of personnel is a major asset.<sup>27</sup> This equates to proficiency and unit stability. Members of an active duty unit usually stay in place for only two years. Additionally, the reserve program attracts mature individuals, 30% of whom are college students or college graduates.<sup>28</sup> These highly versatile Marines are interested in serving their country and fulfilling personal goals in their own community. This level of professional development and unity is difficult to achieve in an active duty unit.

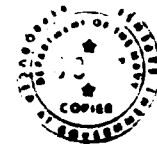
The reservists share a common background with their active duty counterparts with the same basic training and annual qualification requirements.<sup>29</sup> However, as managers, the reserve Marine must be more proficient in budgeting and time management. A reservist only has one weekend a month (drill) or two weeks of Annual Training Duty (ATD) to accomplish all of the standardized training requirements. The standard training foundation is supplemented with modernized equipment and weapon systems that are fully integrated into any active duty unit when mobilized. With current strengths of 20,600 in 4th Marine Division, 8600 in the 4th Marine Air Wing and 9200 in the 4th Force Service Support Group



... coupled with a less than 30 day mobilization deadline ...<sup>30</sup> the Marine reserves form a credible tasking resource for an operational commander. The reserves can be employed as individuals, company, or battalion sized units. All three methods of activation were used "during Desert Shield/Storm effectively."<sup>31</sup>

Within the time restraints imposed by legislation, there exists a capability to exploit the training periods for reserves. This capability is mostly misunderstood and viewed primarily as a limitation. However, reserves can be activated for annual training (ATD) for sixteen days. Additionally, they are allocated forty-eight, four hour, drill periods annually. These funded periods of duty can be used in any arrangement, but are normally divided into a separate ATD period (summer) and four drills (2 day weekend) per month for twelve months. This institutionalized arrangement was developed for ease in accounting, but has great flexibility for utilization. The combination of two week ATD and 24 days worth of drill can be molded to meet known commitments of an operational commander.<sup>32</sup> Additional funding can also provide for at least one third of the reserve units to receive additional paid drills or alternate ATDs. This resource base can be exploited if early coordination is achieved to tap the reserve budgeting plan. If needed, additional funding is available for specific periods of time, which could reinforce active forces during peak contingency periods.

These capabilities are the significant, measurable assets that an operational commander can integrate into his active force.



Leadership in the reserves has the potential of being a significant force multiplier. Reserve Marines are proficient. The senior enlisted and officer reservists average "6.2 years of active service before joining a reserve unit."<sup>33</sup> Currently, fifty percent of Marine Corps reserve units have combat experience from Desert Storm.<sup>34</sup> Reserve unit integrity, combat power, experience, leadership and ingrained command and control cannot be overlooked in the wake of our declining active force personnel base. The other consideration, is the separate funding codes used by reserve forces. As budgetary restraints continue to limit active duty training and maintenance, the additional pooling of resources may prove to be critical from the reserves, in order to continue the operational tempo. Most of the limitations imposed on reserve forces can be offset with effective preplanning and early identification of requirements. In the final analysis, reserve capabilities far outweigh their limitations. Employing our reserve forces can open new avenues to the employment of operational forces.



## V. EMPLOYMENT

To employ the capabilities of reserve forces, yet yield to the limitations imposed requires four schemes: planning, training, funding and augmentation avenues. Planning for the specific use of these flexible forces is essential. The success of reserve employment is dependent on detailed coordination and rehearsal. Reservists are not excluded by legislation from participating with active duty units, only the time they can participate is mandated by law. The legal use of reserves in conjunction with active forces dates back to the Naval Reserve and Marine Corps Reserve Act of 1916.<sup>36</sup>

### Planning

Planning to integrate the reserves into the active duty structure will be important if the Presidential recall authority is granted. Preplanned access will be critical for incorporating reserve forces if an involuntary mobilization is not granted. Presidential recall of the reserves would be fairly routine to incorporate. For the remainder of this section, the assumption will be that a recall has not been authorized and the operational commander cannot get the desired forces from active duty units (come as you are). In this case, planning can be incorporated now, for reserve employment, to offset known active duty commitments. Then, a farther reaching plan to tap the various assets in the reserve must be developed within the legal constraints of time on active duty.



## Training

The most obvious use of Reserve forces is to expand the current level of reserve participation in training exercises. This plan could give the operational commander some immediate relief in commitments for his active Marine units. The reserve already participates with battalion sized units in most major training operations. This approach has not been exploited because of adequate active duty personnel to support the training requirements. An expanded use of reserve regimental landing teams, operating as they did during Desert Shield/Storm, could surge forward presence and demonstrate commitment to our allies. "Reserves contributed to Exercise Team Spirit in Korea, as well as a Marine Expeditionary Brigade for Exercise Battle Griffin in Norway."<sup>36</sup> This preplanned training evolution would enhance our readiness posture, demonstrating the ability of our reserve response.

Reserve operations would free the otherwise overly committed active forces, enabling readiness for other contingencies or a rest period. With three operational ARGs and an increase in potential crisis response missions, the reserves could be programmed to effectively conduct three major theater training operations per year. The shortfalls of this plan would be lift and movement assets, but this shortfall also provides a realistic mobilization problem for reserve planning. The benefits of this plan would be the experience gained by the reserve units, and the demonstration of reserve mobilization for our allies. This concept also capital-



izes on the previous combat experience of the reserves. Compared to a two week training refresher at Camp Pendleton, California, the costs for execution are equivalent. However, the contribution to our overall defense concept is significant. Operational commanders can execute this plan within six months, if planning/coordination are maintained.

Reserve units are flexible from a deployment viewpoint. Preplanned unit deployments of sixteen days can be executed annually by reserves. These units can be deployed as companies, battalions or regiments. Reserves maintain the ability to task organize to the operational requirements. Reserve airlift and service support can be programmed into the training plan. If specific assets are needed in a region, the reserves can tailor two week packages to assist or augment active duty forces. For example, individual engineer companies could be used to "round out a Battalion Landing Team."<sup>37</sup> Reserve reconnaissance companies could be attached to Regimental/MEB headquarters.<sup>38</sup> Reserve battalions could reinforce forward deployed regiments in Korea or Okinawa. Each of these units carry specific mission capabilities that reinforce and augment the leaner personnel posture of current active duty units. Early assignment of assets from both communities is necessary to maintain smooth transitions, in the event of a crisis. Once these designations and apportionments are decided, then planning for implementation must be completed. The dividend is an integration plan for reserve units, that can offset peacetime



active duty commitments and prepare for augmentation during a crisis.

### **Funding**

Several avenues currently exist, within the legislative confines of reserve "man days," to exploit the reserve assets. First, the reserve units could conduct their usual mobilization training fly away to their station of initial assignment, in order to link up with a receiving active duty units. This training cycle exercises the mobilization system and creates familiarity with both reserve and active personnel for future operations. One of the lessons learned from Desert Shield/Storm was that reserves needed early integration to active units, to decrease the indoctrination period. This concept is particularly vital during compressed marshalling periods during a crisis.

Early mission assignment, a preauthorized unit augmentation plan, and detailed deployment windows would place the reserve unit commanders in a position of accountability. This also applies to reserve headquarters elements who could be assigned early to operational staffs for contingency planning and pre-workup phases for reserve tasking. This funding plan parallels the specific requirements for augmentation created as the active Marine forces diminish, particularly within the service support structure. To provide sustainability, reserve support units such as truck companies, landing support units, C-130 squadrons, Military Police and engineers will become vital in the future. Early plans to



integrate these support forces into a cohesive employment structure will provide the foundation for implementation. The training cycles of the active and reserve forces, if matched, provide flexibility for the operational commander.

The funding for reserve training periods, under law, are fixed but provide some flexibility in execution. If coordinated, this funding asset can also enhance active duty readiness. Active duty staffs require detailed coordination with the reserve staffs, to obligate funds and synchronize training efforts. Although the normal period of Annual Training Duty (ATD) is sixteen days, there are provisions for additional ATD funding. One course, to gain additional training days, is to "save drill days" and exchange the funding for the ATD. Minor administrative calculations must be adhered to, but in effect, it extends the period of training for reserves and their availability to active duty forces. This funding contingency is used extremely well by the Air Force reserve and accounted for 42% of the strategic flights into Southwest Asia.<sup>39</sup> As long as individuals do not surpass 16 "ATD days" and 48 drill periods per year, the uses are legal.<sup>40</sup>

As an example, assume that the commander requires additional engineer support within his theater. Among the other assets available, he could gain reserve engineer companies. The engineer company saves twenty four drills and uses this funding in conjunction with their normal ATD period (16 days). In effect, the reserve engineer company can support the requirements for 24 days. By overlapping four engineer companies, one every three weeks, over





200 reserve engineers could support this operation for a 90 day period. As support personnel become increasingly fewer, this innovative approach will be required to maintain much of our current capabilities.<sup>41</sup>

Integration of reserve units, in this manner, exploits all available assets in equipment, personnel and funding that will be needed in the future to keep pace with commitments. Incorporating the reserve also capitalizes on their experience from Desert Storm and from their unique problem solving perspective. The reserve units benefit, active duty units benefit, and the operation remains within the scope of the legislative guidance.

Most reserve augmentation scenarios may be critical to the active force from a sustainment standpoint. The concern for tomorrow will not be to get more riflemen on the scene, but will be to keep the ones in place sustained long enough to do their job. To assist the commander in identifying requirements early and then matching reserve capability to solve the shortfall, several assets are available.

#### **Augmentation Avenues**

One method, at the Commanding General, FMF, level is the use of a Reserve Liaison Officer (RLO), or a Reserve Special Staff Officer (RSSO). These billets are available, but are rarely requested. The billets can be funded by reserve Commanding Generals or employed solely for retirement credits. A senior officer normally occupies the billet (O-5/O-6) and is responsible



for coordination between the reserve establishment and the active duty commander. Currently, these billets have filtered down to Recruiting Stations, Mobilization Centers or major Marine Corps installations. These senior officers are the key to the reserve assets and could provide timely, detailed coordination for an operational commander into the reserve structure. This is not a new or revolutionary concept, but one that has habitually been under used due to the sufficiency of our active duty forces. With this ability back on the CG's staff, many of the hidden reserve assets will receive the planning and coordination needed for effective employment.

If coordination has been implemented and reserve commanders have been involved in operating with their active duty counterparts, then reserves will maintain the flexibility to support a crisis response when needed. If neglected, as in the past, the crisis response will pass before the reserves can react. The later situation is unacceptable at an operational level in view of the limited assets available for future contingencies. The main benefits of early planning with reserve units is the ability to generate an accurate listing of "initial volunteers."<sup>42</sup>

These reserve Marines, during a crisis, can "volunteer" for active duty assignments, long before the President decides on an "involuntary call-up." The only limitation is funding, and the Marine Corps' ability to organize these volunteers. After the success of this program in Desert Shield/Storm, funding may not be the issue, but organizing the volunteers will be continuous. "1100



Marine reservists volunteered before the call-up."<sup>43</sup> It was estimated that 5,000 could have volunteered early, but the Marine Corps had no organized way of notifying or passing warning orders to those who wanted to volunteer early. Currently, this capability of reserve volunteers needs to be documented, screened, preorganized and categorized for future crisis support. With the declining active duty personnel situation, a system for identifying, contacting and mustering these early volunteers will be vital.

If commanders maintain, update and retain current manifests, 5,000 or more additional Marines could be formed to support a contingency in less than a week. These volunteers could be categorized early into combat arms, service support, or aviation assets.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, once organized into "volunteer units," they could be trained at additional ATD sites, with receiving active units as contingency augmentees. In a "general support" category, they could be formed to support or augment the critical mobility functions, such as C-130 squadrons, truck companies, armor or engineer support. As demonstrated in Desert Shield/Storm, reservists are motivated to serve in a time of crisis. With viable volunteer recruitment, many former Marines leaving active duty would be tempted to complete enlistments in the reserve. This system is the most flexible for employment in support of a crisis response. Particularly, if the operational commander faces sequential crises occurring over a short period of time and neither are of a magnitude to force a reserve call-up. In these cases,



early volunteers and assets must be on hand and organized to support forward deployed Marines.

Several other reserve programs exist that could provide an operational commander with additional occupation specialties that will become fewer as personnel strengths decline. The "Individual Mobilization Augmentees" fill the critical gaps in specific occupation fields and are available for early activation, if needed.<sup>45</sup> Electronics, engineer support, and avionic technicians are a few of the job specific occupations for the commander to augment. These reserves then assist in preparing the circuits and avenues to fill the required augmentation structure with reserves. The IMA personnel could assist in structuring the initial volunteers or in filling critical personnel gaps which may slow deployment to a crisis area. Combine the IMA program to the "Extended Active Duty (EAD)" and the "Full Time Support (FTS)" programs, and the commander can tailor a reserve augmentation plan for an extended period, normally two years.<sup>46</sup> EAD and FTS programs have long existed to support the link between reserves and active duty communities. Again, under-utilized, these programs have reverted to support personnel at Recruiting Stations, installations and Reserve Support Centers. The operational commander can muster many reservists on these programs, to support his current operational tempo, and ultimately to provide a conduit into the reserve structure as liaison and coordination personnel.

Reserve Marines maintain a force enhancement capability to the operational commander, but must be innovatively incorporated into



current operational plans. The reserve cannot solely be viewed as a reconstitution force for national policy. As our current force projection capability declines, the operational commander will rely more and more on unique ways to enhance his posture for crisis response. Reserves can provide this capability by early planning, mission assignment and integrated training with operational forces. If not identified, however, this capability will remain hidden from the commander, thus denying him access to 25% of his potential Marine forces. If past history is an indicator, then operational commanders will not choose to augment their forces with reserve units, as a first choice. He will deplete his other options in available active duty forces first. Times will change, and fewer crisis response active duty forces will remain. The capabilities of the Marine Corps Reserve can no longer be overlooked by the commander. The reserve performance of the future, will depend on how well the operational commander prepared the route to their employment.



## VI. CONCLUSIONS

"With declining defense budgets and a planned reduction of active component forces, Congress is calling for an increased role for Reserve components in the future as a way to maintain sufficient military capability at less cost."<sup>47</sup> Marine Operational Commanders have no choice in the reduction of forces. They are limited by Congressional and Presidential criteria for full use of reserve forces. Active duty personnel assets will require full exploitation if they are available. If active duty forces are not available, then the operational commander must judge the adequacy of his forces unsuitable and request a decision from the policy-makers. The astute operational commander will have developed the planning and training cycle with his Marine Reserves to provide an early response to this situation. "In building the total force, the services must be able to predict with more certainty, when they can count on the reserve component ..."<sup>48</sup>

When weighing the limitations and capabilities of the reserves, clearly the major limiting feature is the time they can serve on active duty. Short of an involuntary recall, the operational commander may not receive a large number of reserves. However, as the active strength declines, the reserve carries some substantial capabilities to fill critical personnel shortages in support areas. This is a new dilemma we face with reduced forces. Time limitations can be overcome with detailed planning and rapid integration. The reserve can assume some operational theater



requirements, such as exercises, logistic facilities, or repair centers, that usually add to the over commitment of the limited active duty forces. It usually takes three Marines to support one rifleman. Today we are progressing towards two of these support Marines coming from the reserve. This necessity will progressively become critical if the end strength falls below 150,000 active Marines.

Innovative use of reserve assets will start at the operational level, as competent reserve officers provide input to the commander for consideration. Innovative use of funding, drill days, and ATD are the hallmark of crafty, experienced reservists who take their duties seriously. This opportunity for personnel augmentation is a tremendous resource to an "under T/O" commander. Mustering, forming and identification of initial volunteers, appears to be the wave of the future for early augmentation, within legal limits of the law. This area is one that operational commanders could exploit, particularly from the service support level, i.e., trucks, engineers, etc. The reserves will continue to play an expanded role in maintaining the Marine Corps' capability. An avenue that a Marine operational commander must not overlook because of our old perceptions or ways of accomplishing a mission. Operational staffs must be tasked to develop this resource and ensure that it is attainable if or when it is needed.

The staff will be required to unlock the door that Congress has slammed on our personnel strengths. Many keys exist. "The need therefore exists for a reliable (reserve) source of manpower



to fill and quickly expand the Marine Corps ..."<sup>49</sup> If only combat forces are required, then the U.S. may be facing an involuntary recall. If the commander determines his structure and personnel numbers are inadequate, and he must maintain the operational tempo, then a reserve augmentation structure may be required for essential support to Marine active units. In either case, the reserve will play an increasingly important role.

The Marine Corps use of reserve forces has proven that we have the capability to augment with reserves and win. The Marine reserve system may be a model for all services' reserve programs. Reserve organizations will also be required to set the pace in future operations to maintain active duty Marine assets in the face of declining resources. To incorporate reserves into the operational planning is risky, only if the reserves are unprepared. Reserves will become increasingly relied upon to fill the gap that exists when base forces decline. Additionally, operational commanders must be relied upon to apply genius and innovation to preparing the reserves for their augmentation roles. Commanders must use all means available, to ensure adequate funding for reserve programs and maintain access to this personnel source. If the United States has decided to put a substantial portion of our forces in "reserve," then it is our duty as leaders to integrate them into our operational scheme. They possess the capability, now is the time to employ them.





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